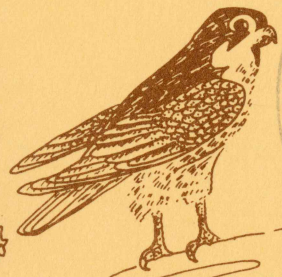
The Tower



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The Tower

Fall 1985

The Literary Magazine

of

The University of Montevallo

This edition of the Tower is dedicated to Mrs. Charlotte Blackmon for her tireless efforts in promoting international understanding.

Mrs. Blackmon attended the University of Montevallo and obtained her undergraduate degree in both English and History. She received her master's degree in English from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

Charlotte became interested in Intercultural studies after attending a trip to Europe with the European Seminar group on campus. After her return, she began coordinating orientation classes for students wishing to learn more about other people, and other countries. The growth of these classes eventually lead to an Intercultural Studies program. Now Montevallo is the only university in the state of Alabama which offers the Intercultural Studies major.

"To get to the fruit on the tree, you have to go out on a limb."

- Shirley MacLaine -

'Out on a limb'

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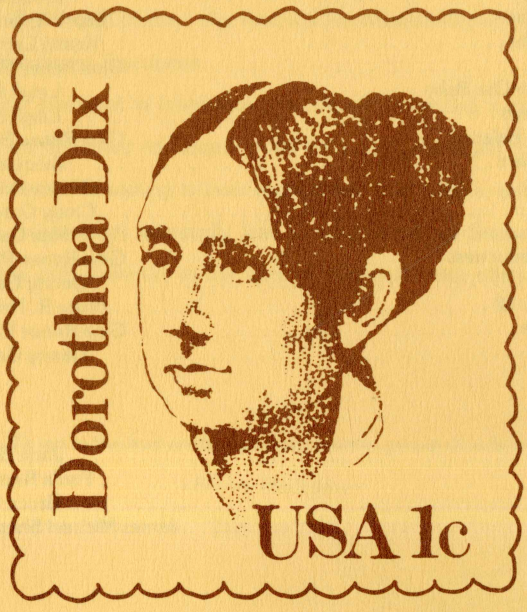
* Designates Tower Award
** Honorable Mention

"Poor, poor Dorothea Dix"

Poor, poor Dorothea Dix-
So sad in stamps
She's turning tricks,
penny tricks.
Poor, poor Dorothea Dix-
From per chance lovers
Only licks.
Poor, poor Dorothea Dix

Max Cassady



Late Summer

I shout to no avail
to no avail I SCREAM

...is this a price you've placed upon my head
or just a dream you dangle out of reach

I sit alone and tune myself to death
sharing a laugh with Plato and Socrates
over spilled milk and blood
...basking with Dante in the majesty
of three orbs.

Alan Brasher

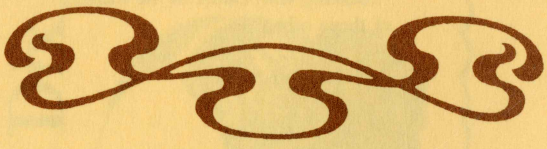
PIECES

Every day, hour, and minute--time;
Someone touches our heart.
Although they can't read our mind,
It is love from the start.

They hung joy and happiness so true,
Along with a little sorrow and despair;
However, in everything they do,
They always show they care.

They touch our lives with love,
Fit pieces in where they belong,
Take the place of that above.
And you hear it in a song.....

Patrick Scott Grissett



Cat Tails

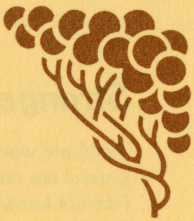
In the spring of a life,
A normal day,
With a gust of wind,
The cat tails sway.
The sound clatters briefly
With nothing to say,
A secret immortal,
The cat tails sway.
And death calls a number,
A soul must obey,
A life light extinguished,
While cat tails sway.

Jerri Buckingham

He Loves Me

My heart is joyous
And hope
Lights my day.
He loves me!
Illumination,
Bright delight,
Horizons aglow-
He loves me!
I turn and smile,
Push feelings to the sky
And beyond,
To touch him.
He loves me!
Happiness wells
And surges within me
Until it escapes me
As tears-
The only expression
Intense enough-
Then laughter,
Wild and carefree,
To set my soul
On wings.
He loves me!

Jerri Buckingham



Ke-Ke

You are the midnight beauty
  that beams of moon-lit eyes
  and star-glit smiles
Who softly tips across the pathways
  of my private whims
Reminding me of Black-Berry-Pickin'-Time
And songs of black piano keys
You are the colored shade of summer trees

The crafting of your black coated skin
Relays the sweetness of a black jelly bean
And
  Depicts the realness
    Of An African Queen

Albert Southall

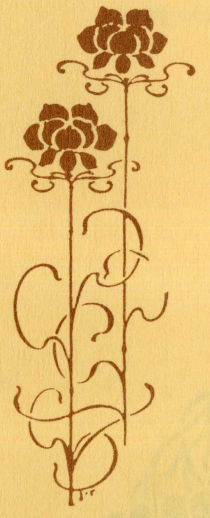
Strange Apology

Timid are words spoken
Careful are our eyes for every movement.
I do not know her, nor she me,
Yet she comes tonight knocking
With strange apology.

She is a mystery.
I move to touch,
But the same mistakes I see-
For I have walked these fields before
Where love like a spring flows
To flow nevermore,
And old man winter turns green to grey,
Laughing emptily
For his disappointment to play.

Away though, old ways-
Your past is long past,
And lovers that never were
Are loves not to last.
I will see her. She might even see me,
In sorrow or in joys.
So away, old man winter!
Take home your old noise!

Max Cassady



Scene Two

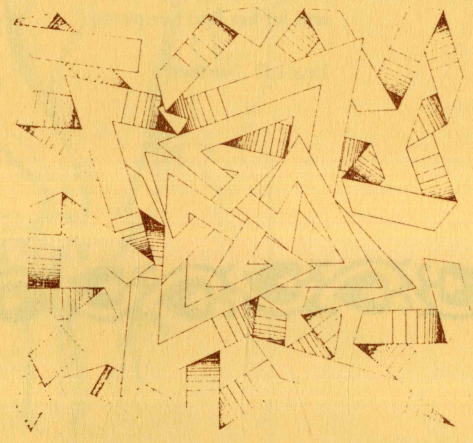
What are we supposed to do?
We've oozed through the initial
stages, survived them pretty
well, and despite hesitations,
we've created a little
pocket of comfort.

Now what?

We left before the neat edges
could be trimmed neater;
we left when things were
screaming to be continued;
we left with the choicelessness
of an impending summer.

Miles of minutes, play-dough stretched days;
they're all cruel.
And when I see you again
there's no guarantee of patched
time, or re-knitted feelings.
Even love can suffer in this heat,
while we're torn apart
by a savage land.

Jacquie Wee



Design 1B by Jane Brown

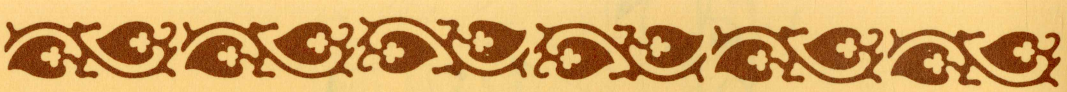
TO MY GRANDMOTHER

Go.
Go and find your peace.
There's no more here for you.
Go and find your peace.
Don't hang on.

You know we love you dearly,
but dear, it's time to go.
Go and find your peace.
Don't hang on,
you've lived a graceful life,
now end it as it was.

God, we loved her dearly,
but it's time for the dear to go.
Don't make her lie in bed,
when she doesn't even know.
Take her to you, please,
and let her find her peace.

Bryce R. Northen



One Summer Night

(with respects to E.A. Robinson)

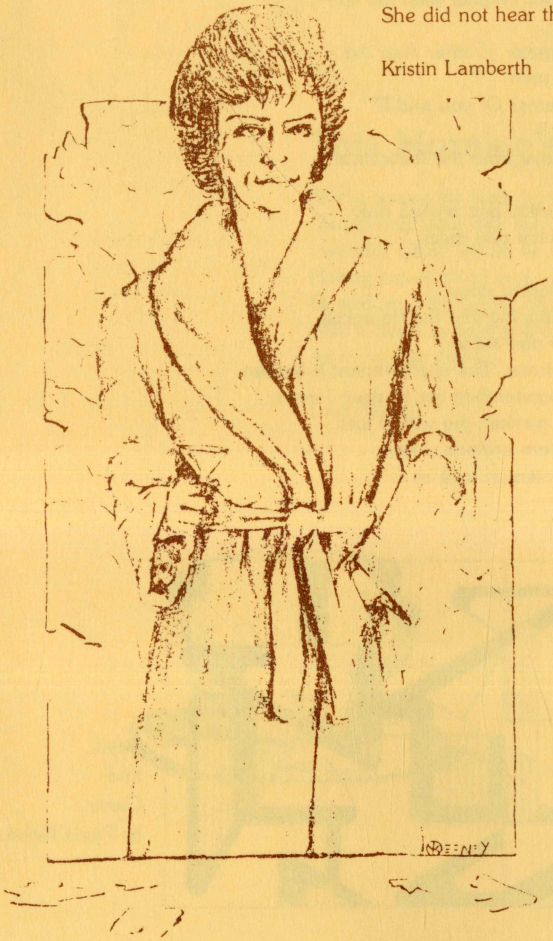
Do you remember Richard Cory
For whom the bells of Tilbury Town did toll?
He died one summer in such poetic glory,
A wonderful man, but one lost soul.

But do you know of his wife?
Elizabeth, whose beauty put to shame all other maids;
She became his all, his strength, his life,
And, at the reception, they drank champagne.

And, oh, the match was perfect in each detail,
She so beautiful and refined;
And, oh, the marriage could not fail,
Poor Richard- so handsome, and yet so blind.

She lived in comfort and without cares,
Vaguely knowing something was not right;
But so involved in her own affairs,
She did not hear the shot that echoed in the night.

Kristin Lamberth



Disenchantment

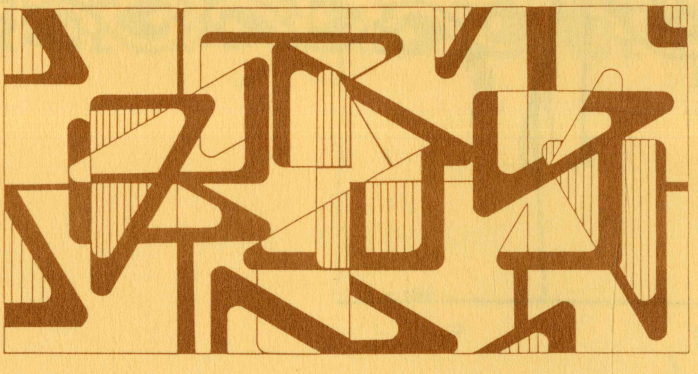
I do not know what space of time it was
Wherein the first pagans overturned their idols
In pursuit of a gentler, more loving god.
Neither can I say whether it was one revelation
Or a series of gradual movements which led me
Away from the altar of this infatuation,
But first thing this morning
I thought of last night and realized
I did not dream of you.

We spent the evening together conversing upon
An infinite deal of nothing.
We spoke of the *Titanic's* icy grave,
The life of Voltaire,
And how the sculpture of Republican Rome
Was so uninspired and lacked passion.
Carrot cake and Russian tea filled the pauses
When the numbness left us too tired
Of forcing the hands round the clock with words.
In the wasting silence, it seemed I heard time
Ticking faster, or was it my heart
Racing towards a grace emptier than my life?

I asked if we could speak of other than Art
Or the lives of dead men.
What of life? Or dreams? Of you and I?
I did not beg an "us."
Could we dare to move from the theoretical
To the real?
You stared at me blankly and replied only,
"I'm not quite sure what you mean."

I hear the sound of falling stone,
Of idols crumbling, slipping into the hourglass,
And passing into the past tense.
Good night, sweet prince. The enchantment is broken
Which would have condemned me to sleep forever,
Unless you chose to awaken me with a kiss.
When the illusions were undone, I saw
That you are as impotent in love as I.

Gina Renee Palmer

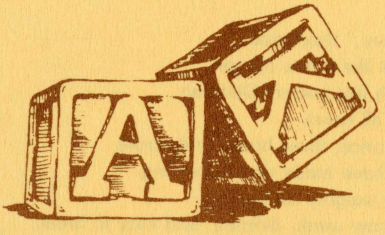


Dead
End
Curve
by Paula Reynolds

Nursery Rhyme for Our Baby

Our baby is a beauty.
Look at us and there's no question why.
He wasn't born of love, however,
Because he came from you and me.
We'll watch him crawl,
Then learn to walk.
We'll teach him to feed himself,
Dress, eat, run and talk.
We'll send him off to school one day
And fight and cheat while he's away.
Then, he'll grow up and take a wife
And live like us all his life.

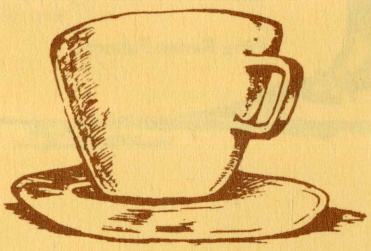
Leigh Bailey



This Morning's News

Sitting across the table from you
Seeing only your hair above this morning's news,
I wonder which would be worse:
Having never loved you,
Or enduring the winter of our love
With a heart as cold and empty
As my coffee cup--

Leigh Bailey



Weighed in the Balance

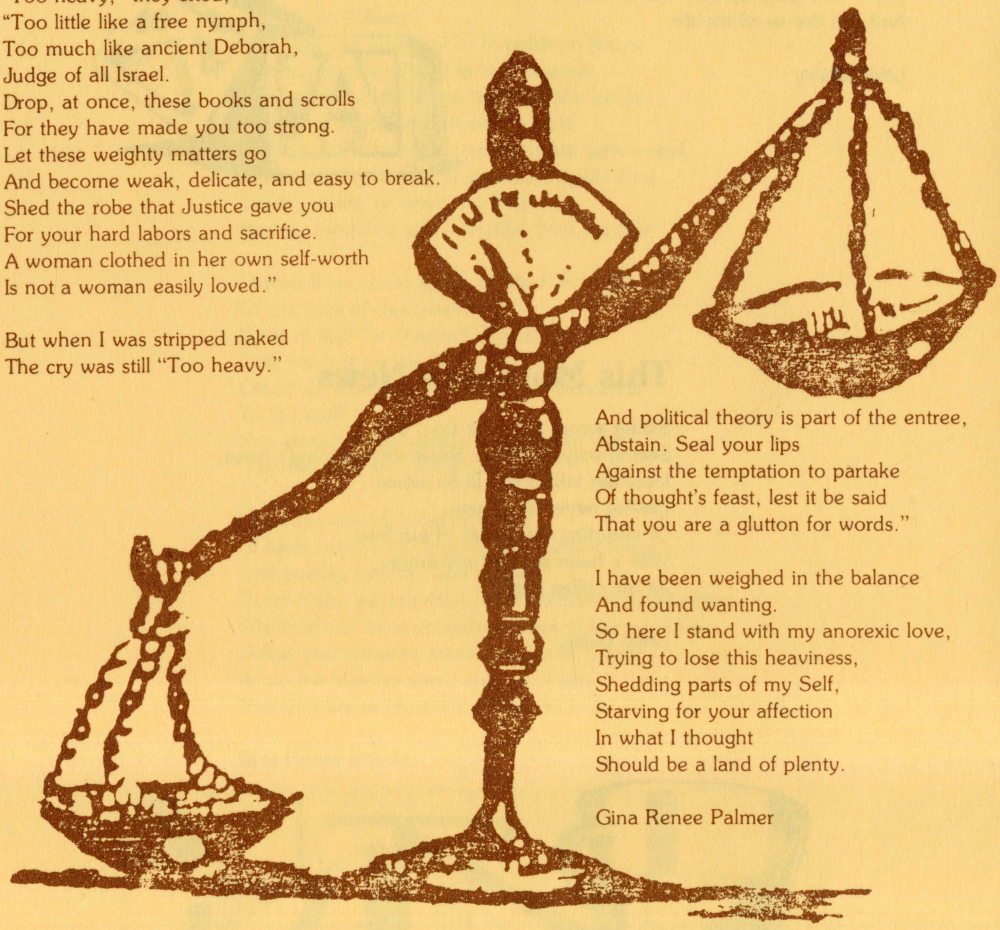
"Lighten up," my friends said,
"This morbid heaviness only distracts
From a woman's beauty.
If you would gain what you desire
You must be willing to lose
Those parts of yourself
Which he finds unattractive."

We began with exteriors.

"Too heavy," they cried,
"Too little like a free nymph,
Too much like ancient Deborah,
Judge of all Israel.
Drop, at once, these books and scrolls
For they have made you too strong.
Let these weighty matters go
And become weak, delicate, and easy to break.
Shed the robe that Justice gave you
For your hard labors and sacrifice.
A woman clothed in her own self-worth
Is not a woman easily loved."

But when I was stripped naked
The cry was still "Too heavy."

"Beware of appearing too well-rounded,
For the searching eye most easily perceives
The simplicity of the angular form,
The certainty of a one-dimensional view.
But with a little here and there removed
You can be reshaped to fit the pattern.
Hereafter, at dinner-table conversations,
When queries on half-truths
Are being passed as appetizers



And political theory is part of the entree,
Abstain. Seal your lips
Against the temptation to partake
Of thought's feast, lest it be said
That you are a glutton for words."

I have been weighed in the balance
And found wanting.
So here I stand with my anorexic love,
Trying to lose this heaviness,
Shedding parts of my Self,
Starving for your affection
In what I thought
Should be a land of plenty.

Gina Renee Palmer

Occupational Hazard

They have set us
back a hundred years-
taken away our half-eaten
pride, left us
with a fifty-cent tip.
I choke back the empty
anger into an already
vapid soul:

They have smiled charmingly
patted our behinds into
bloody pulp and
we still cook for them.
I pretend they don't exist
and talk to
shadows.

They want to play mind
games, silly childish games,
expecting us to play along
while expecting to win.
And we let them.
We're not martyrs, not saints;
I love and love
and love into nothingness.

Go ahead, categorize me
stare at my breasts instead of
my eyes-
anatomy is anatomy is anatomy.

They call me woman for
my first name.
I smile and think,
oh yes, and you're all
definitely
men.

Jacquie Wee

BLUE

Everyone is cold
Everyone is mean
I am the only Blue
And everyone is Green

I can dance and love and laugh
But they don't care
They make fun of my blue eyes
My blue hair

I look out the window
A blue tear runs
Down my face
I feel so alone
I feel so out of place

I shout out
"Are you blind!
I am an original
One of a kind"
The green men come
I try to run away
Trial without jury
Then I'm locked away

Nancy Brindley

"Here, Blue"

Here Blue, tell ya what we're gonna do.
Yesterday we fried the cat; today we'll barbeque you.
The money's too low, the bills are high, my stomach shore feels thin.
I hate the thought, but Blue I think, it's time to do you in.
Blue, ol'boy, you're lookin' low, about like you could cry.
But don't you worry 'bout us, now Blue, somehow we'll get by.
Well, it's supper time, Blue, and you're lookin' mighty good.
Too bad you can't stay around, but Blue you've been a real nice hound. So come here Blue, and I'll tell ya what we're gonna do.
Yesterday we fried the cat; today we'll barbeque you.

Cindy Ossenfort

The Fat Rat

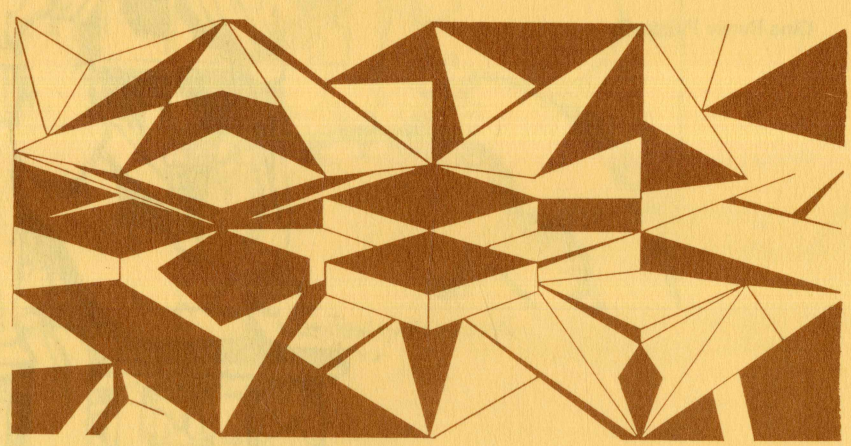
Cute but Kutting
The Kennedy haircut boys
Stoned drunk
On the cliff
        of Armageddon
Those six pack smiles
Of Izod
    Maternity insurance
If he can carve his name
In her party
        cake face.

At first the young rat fears
            the edge
As the dripping D.J. voice
Beckons him to believe
In her
    and nothing
        and everything
Will be his.

Another drink
And he does.
Another drink
And she does--

The Fat Rat smiling from the corner.
He'll find out
About her in the morning.

Max Cassady

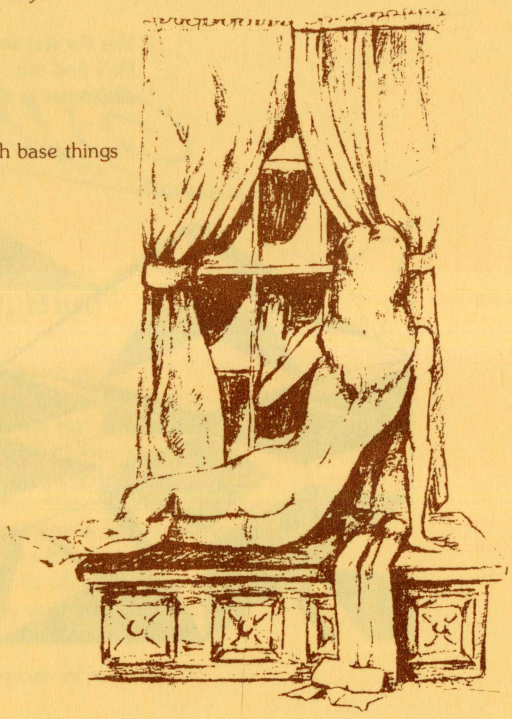


by Jacqy Wagner

The Cold-Weather Seductress

I am not a summer lover,
The humid scorch of a tropical affair
Only burns my skin to discomfort
If I expose my passion to the naked sun.
The sun is always naked, never nude,
For Summer's lovers flash hard, taunt bodies
In stark display. Their lack of subtlety
Obscures access to a sensuality that is unveiled
Layer by layer.
Make mine a winter bed--
A Victorian four-poster of sturdy wood
And flannel sheets to hold the warmth
Of a passion not completed in one hour.
My pleasure is a heavy thing that sparkles
Like long auburn hair,
Like peach brandy in a crystal goblet,
Like warm spiced oil on bare skin.
I do not wear my lust loosely--
Like a cotton blouse casually tossed aside
For a twenty minute tryst--
Mine is tailored to fit exactly and wear well.
It is unfastened carefully, slowly and completely.
I prefer that my nights last longer than my days.
And should you ask what motivates
The cold-weather seductress,
I will reveal the secret.
In the glow of winter fires,
I have studied the arts of ecstacy
And discovered a lover's alchemy by which base things
Are transformed into gold.

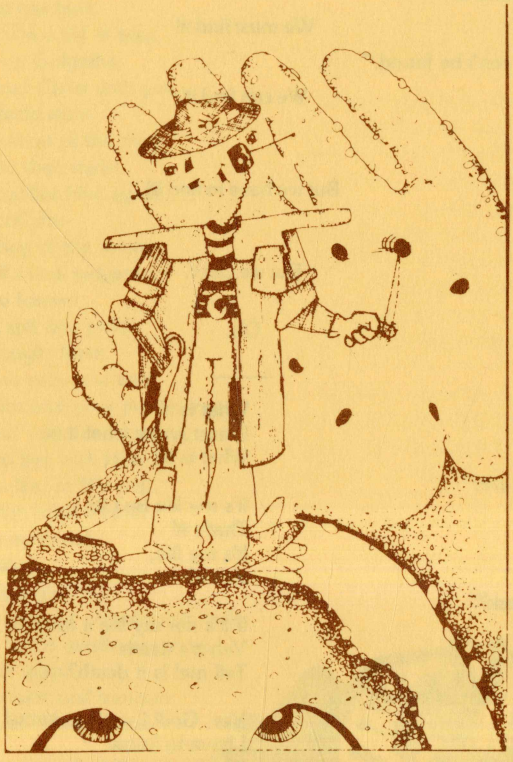
Gina Renee Palmer



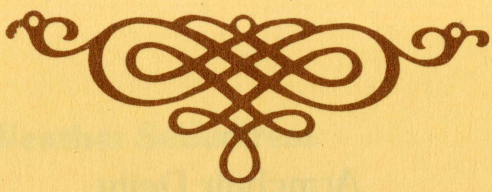
Armchair Deity

God kicked back
in His La-Z-Boy
Popped another beer
and changed the channel
on Mankind

Danny Gamble



Untitled by Bruce Holly



'Oh' Dialogue -1-2

We must travel!
We must travel far!
My God we will travel all year until finally, we make it.
We must travel!
We must travel long!
For the rest of our lives we must travel!
We have to travel!
We could travel all eterniy until we found it!

We must find it!
We must find it now!!!

"We will *never* find it."

We must find it!

"Why bother it *can't* be found."

We *can* find it!

"No!"
"We can't"

But we have to find it!

"Yes!"
"We must."

But we can't.

"Yes."

Oh.

What is it?
I must know what it is.
What is it?

"Why do you care?"

It's my life isn't it?
That's it!
It's my life,
isn't it?

"Why do you ask?"

If it's not my life it must be death.
Yeh it's death.
Tell me! Is it death?

"Do you really want to know?"

Yes, God! I want to know!
I have to know.
Won't you tell me?

"No"

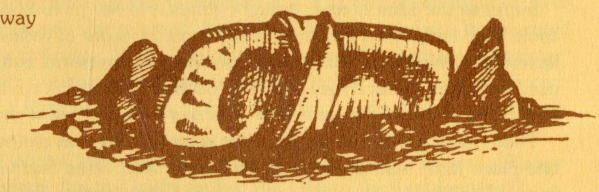
Oh.

Bryce R. Northen

The Zeal of Thy House

(For the New Convert)

I hear your resolute footstep
Falling with an eager heaviness
On the two thousand year old path,
Nearly dislodging the stones
That form the foundation of our faith.
His cross is chained to your neck
In precious silver
As you plunge into the streets
Pushing His form ahead of you.
The teachings of His life forgotten,
You are determined to make His death
An example to the world.
You search the crowds frantically,
Pursuing the face of a new Cyrene
To compel to carry the heavy cross
Your righteous mind has built.
With the assurance of a child at play,
Your legs scramble up Golgotha,
Dragging your chained Christ with you.
With many a holy declaration
And smug condemnation of the mob,
You throw Jesus into their midst
And as the world crucifies Him again-
For sheer contempt of you-
You sing the hurt song of the martyr.
You pronounce Hell's final judgement
And then walk away forever,
Leaving the mob to spit and prod
The sacrifice you brought them.
Outside His tomb you pray and wait
For His re-appearance and your deliverance.
With Heaven on your mind and tongue,
You will not stoop to live with Him
On this earth, in this life, in His way.
You hold the Christian ideal forever
In the future tense suspended.
You gulp the miraculous
With the same careless gluttony
With which you swallow the communion wafer.
Swiftly you wash its bland gentleness away
With the blood of the grape.
I realize that new convert zeal hungers
After the dramatic and craves action,
But I beg you-
Set your own house in order
And when your soul is cleansed,
Come back to the world a gentler prophet
And with the hand of unassuming love,
Accompany the wandering soul to His home.



Gina Renee Palmer

The Second Galactic War

"You are Human."

Commander J.P. Jones opened his eyes to find the statement not nearly so ridiculous as he had first thought, for the speaker was far from human. Multi-faceted eyes regarded him cooly from an overly large hairless cranium. What must have been muscles rippled beneath the light blue-green skin along the creature's thin neck. There seemed to be almost no chin below the tiny, lipless mouth.

"Damn right I'm human, what the hell are you?" The commander found it impossible to move anything below his neck. He decided he must be dreaming. Or, perhaps the psychologists had been correct in predicting schizophrenia on the long voyages to other stars. When he came out of it he'd have to make sure the whole crew began taking the drugs which had been sent along for just this occurance.

The thing's eyes sparkled blue and green as it cocked its hand, and brought its 'hand' to the commander's chin. It turned his head left and right betraying amazing strength despite its light frame. Its hand was uncovered and hairless, the same blue-green of its head; it had three long geometrically opposed fingers. "There has been some genetic change, but you are doubtless human." The thing's mouth hadn't moved. In fact, Jones' ears had registered not a sound.

Commander Jones closed his eyes, took several slow deep breaths, and reopened them. It was still there. "You think I am not real," Jones 'heard'. Its mouth twisted, and the throat muscles contracted spasmodically, "but I assure you, it is I who should have trouble believing in you. By all reason, Humanity cannot have progressed so rapidly."

Looking around, Jones saw that he was standing (though he could feel nothing of his legs) against a wall in a cubical room whose ceiling was just over his head. He could see no means of entrance or exit from the cube.

"Where is my crew?" The part of Jones that was Mission Commander overcame his shock and asserted itself. "Where is my ship, and how the hell did I get here?" The last Jones remembered, he had been conversing with Dr. Sandra Cowling (the mission's astronomer), about the possibility of life in the Epsilon Eridani solar system. Apparently she had been closer to the truth than anyone suspected.

"Your crew's status is identical to your own, commander. Your ship is in a state of dissassembly so that we might determine the level of your civilization's technological achievement. As for your arrival here: teleportation is the best description that I can give." During the speech, the alien's mouth twitched and twisted, but did not form the words.

"Now I know I'm nuts," groaned the commander, and the thing cocked its head and promptly disappeared. This only further convinced Jones of his space fever and he spent the next hour howling for the mission's doctor.

The first thing Jones noticed when he awoke was that he was laying on his right side on a floor. He jerked upright to find himself still in the cubicle. There was no light source, and he cast no shadow, but he could see his own nakedness and the corners of the room without difficulty. He stood up, and for what seemed an eternity he searched the small room to no avail. Then he sat and pondered.

When the psychs on the moon had spoken of hallucinations, they had mentioned fierce space monsters, giant space ships, false mirage-like stars and even the possibility of a crew member suspecting another of being alien. But they'd said nothing about being captured by a five foot tall, wimpy looking, bug-eyed creature that didn't need to talk. The cubicle he was in certainly seemed real enough; he'd bruised his shoulder trying to knock the walls down.

Suppose the alien is real, thought Jones. He seems to know of humanity, if not much about us. What could they learn from our ship? They must be more advanced, so they probably don't want to learn our technology. Weapons? All we have on board are personal lasars, not even nukes. They don't even seem to need weapons. What if they want the location of Earth? A coldness crept up his spine. Surely our star charts would give it away! He sat in fear, wishing he could know more.

Then, from out of thin air, the alien returned. He was clothed from 'ankle' to 'wrist' to neck, in a silvery, one-piece jump suit. Jones noticed that its uncovered feet were slightly larger, but identical to its three-fingered hands. Jones quickly stood, wondering what to do. The alien raised an arm, 'palm' outward, and 'said': "Please be calm. I am to keep you and your crew safe and healthy. It would not be good for your mind to keep you bound in stasis as you were before."

Not wanting to again be frozen in place, the Commander relaxed and leaned against a wall. His heart raced and his mind screamed in frustration. "What am I doing here?" He heard himself sounding amazingly calm.

Standing with its arms at its sides, the alien's throat did its muscular dance, its mouth began to twist and Jones heard the 'voice': "In answer to your very first question, I, like you, command a ship whose mission is of utmost importance to my race. For over a hundred-thousand of your years, many galactic civilizations have suspected the existence of your race and have sought your world. Many of my race have died to protect the secret of your existence."

Stunned, Jones could only say, "You already know where Earth is?" Then, "Why did you stop my ship?"

"Coming from whence it did, your ship could only have been of Human manufacture. There are no other intelligent races this far out in this arm of the galaxy. And of course we know where your planet is; we put you there."

"Put us there? We evolved there!" Commander jones was reconsidering the space fever theory.

"My ancestors searched for centuries for the right place to replant Humanity- a place safe for Humanity as a race, yet cruel enough to make the individual strive. My forefathers felt is unspeakably wrong to let all of Human creativity and beauty perish in spite of your crimes, so they searched, and nurtured the survivors of Humanity, until they found your Earth. It was perfect; there was even a race incredibly similar to yours already evolved. But I saw in your computer that even before you invented the wheel, you hunted the Neandrathals into extinction."

"Crimes?" There was fuzz on the edge of Jones' mind. Something inside told him he should be angry, rebellious. But he felt drowsy and confused and didn't want to move. "The Neandrathals weren't fit to survive."

"Why does Humanity always consider itself above nature, and yet use nature's laws as excuses for his own actions? A hundred-thousand years ago, Humanity was a young race, as was mine. Both our races came from close to the center of the galaxy. We were awed by your reasoning ability, your creativity and your achievements, but we were horrified by your selfishness and disregard for less advanced races. My race assumed a role as a buffer to protect other eraces from your expansion, but even though we are older as a race, you soon surpassed us technologically. Then we began to feel the sting of Human Nature. One by one, stars were lost to us and other races. The Humans drove us out and exploited the captured star systems, often resulting in the extinction of entire ecosystems."

Commander John Paul Jones was silent. He was beginnig to seriously hope that he was insane.

"Do not think that we stood by and let all this happen. But we were the Indians of that time and Galactic War was incomprehensible to most space-faring races. How does one convince a race which has not even had a word for war in its language for a hundred generations to fight? My race could not, but yours did. You developed the ability to induce a star to nova. The worst weapon in galactic history, then and now, was used by Humans to eliminate entire civilizations. Not even peaceful races were spared."

Jones had read of such things. It was like hurling ten thousand nukes into a sun; Kaboom!

The alien captain continued, motionless except for the writhing of his throat and the contorting of his mouth, "Then the galaxy came to us, beginning for weapons, and war swept the galactic center. Half a thousand years it took, before the last Human sun was exploded, but my ancestors saved a few, and found a sun, far from galactic civilization, for a new Human start. They returned periodically to observe your progress. They even tried to give you guidelines to develop in peace, but rather than viewing the guidelines as granting freedom for all, they were seen as restrictions, rules to be enforced. This is not true for all places on your globe, but you see which view won out. Now, suddenly, less than a thousand years from our last visit, here you are at our doorstep, looking for a place to which to expand again."

The commander closed his own eyes, but the alien's with hundreds of tiny blue and green sparkles were inside his head. "No, no... you've got us all wrong," he groaned. He hoped the scientists back home could detonate a star. Humanity would need it, he thought. "We're the good guys, see? We beat the Russians."

"Based on the nuclear reactor on board your ship, and the historical and scientific records stored in your computer we see that you've already used a device similar to a Nova Bomb in warfare upon yourselves. Human Nature seems to never change."

"oh, no, it does, it does!" Terror clutched Jones' hart as he fully realized just how sane he was. "Please, just let me go home and speak to the President. I'm the commander. He'll listen, he'll understand!"

"I think he would understand all too well. Besides it is too late. I've summoned the fleet. The second Galactic War is on, and this time you are the Indians." And with that, the alien cocked his hairless head and teleported out.

Rescue Mission-Earth

The commander of the Star Traveller Mastigora faced the assembled members of his crew.

"I'm here to talk about the planet called Earth. As you know, we were sent here as a rescue team. This briefing is to give you a clear idea of what we're up against."

He continued speaking as he moved to one side of the congregation, revealing the screen now growing between parting sheets of the translucent wall metal.

"We are now in range to show you actual pictures of parts of the planet's surface."

The expressions on the crew's faces changed from polite curiosity to fear and horror as they looked at the screen. Violent storms with smashing lightning wracked the landscape they saw. Giant waves of turbulent, wreck-strewn water rampaged from one side of the scene to the other. The picture changed to one of fiery enragement where flames and molten earth licked what must have once been a forest. The star-goer's wide-range perceptual vision was jolted as they identified the massive bombardment of this planet by devastating solar and cosmic waves...and the radiation! Mostly they saw the warping disruption of high radiation.

"We can't possibly save them!" spoke a male crew member, "Why are we here?"

The commander signalled, the screen was concealed, and he faced his team with the calm of one who is in the right. "The Galaxies' representatives voted unanimously to go to the limit to save the inhabitants of this world. They are evolved to almost a Class D rating and we have determined that with just a little training, they can master our abilities of telepathy, telekinesis, thought transfer, and teleportation. I even believe they can be taught some of our higher skills with the right techniques. They have the key ingredient,-they know Love."

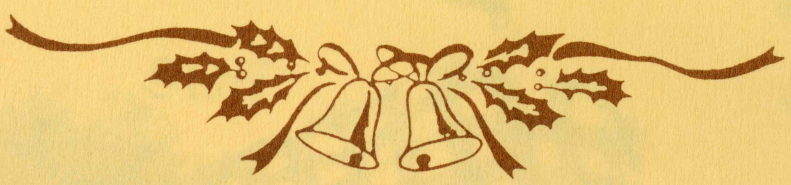
The murmurs of assent echoed on every member's lips, because of course, if they know Love they must be saved.

"We'll be going in tomorrow," he continued, "and we hope to rescue and revive at least 30 percent of the population. Any more question?"

One of the female crew members raised an arm at this point while looking at the information sheet on her desk. "What about this species over here, Homo sapiens?"

"We've been told to leave them. They just don't have the same potential as the other animals. Besides, they caused this mess."

Jerri Buckingham



Merry Christmas

The smoke is clearing
in Beirut town
Christmas cease fire
people running around
Chop down a Christmas tree
don't you step on no mine
'Cause the streets are full
of those Zionist shrines

Merry Christmas
Merry Christmas

The snow is falling
in old Kabul
Huddle 'round the campfire
bellies good and full
God down to the city
don't you step on no mine
'Cause the mountains are full
of those Marxist shrines

Merry Christmas
Merry Christmas

Everything is quiet
in San Salvador
Talking to the priest
says he'll open up the door
Go to midnight mass
don't you step on no mine
'Cause the jungles are full
of those capitalist shrines

Merry Christmas
Merry Christmas

Danny Gamble

Paul William ("Bear") Bryant (1913–1983)

by James Michael Shepherd

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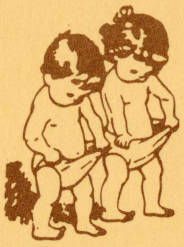
MONTEVALLO



There is a difference